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In Arabic grammar (النحو), the term مفعول (mafʿūl) refers broadly to a noun in the accusative case (منصوب) that is connected to the action of the verb. Classical grammarians usually identify five main types of مفعول.

1. مفعول به (Direct Object)

Definition: The person or thing directly affected by the action of the verb.
Example:

- كَتَبْتُ الرِّسَالَةَ
  I wrote the letter.
- قَرَأَ الطَّالِبُ الكِتَابَ
  The student read the book.

Here الرسالة and الكتاب are the objects receiving the action.

2. مفعول مطلق (Absolute Object / Cognate Accusative)

A verbal noun (مصدر) derived from the same root as the verb used to:

- emphasize the action

- describe its type
- describe its quantity

Example (emphasis)

- ضَرَبْتُهُ ضَرْبًا
  I ضرب him a striking (I struck him strongly).

Example (type)

- سَارَ الجَيْشُ سَيْرًا سَرِيعًا
  The army marched a rapid march.

Example (number)

- دَقَقْتُ البَابَ دَقَّتَيْنِ
  I knocked on the door twice.

3. مفعول فيه (Adverb of Time or Place / ظرف)

Indicates time or place in which the action occurs. It is also called الظرف.

Example (time)

- صُمْتُ يَوْمَ الجُمُعَةِ
  I fasted on Friday.

Example (place)

- جَلَسْتُ أَمَامَ البَيْتِ
  I sat in front of the house.

4. مفعول له (Object of Cause / Purpose)

Explains why the action is performed.
It is usually a masdar indicating a reason.

Example

- سَافَرْتُ طَلَبًا لِلْعِلْمِ
  I traveled seeking knowledge.
- يَجْتَهِدُ الطَّالِبُ رَغْبَةً فِي النَّجَاحِ
  The student works hard out of desire for success.

5. مفعول معه (Object of Accompaniment)

A noun introduced by وَاو المعية (the wāw of accompaniment) meaning “together with / along with.”

Example

- سِرْتُ وَالنَّهْرَ
  I walked along with the river.
- جَاءَ الطَّالِبُ وَالمُعَلِّمَ
  The student came with the teacher.

Note: This وَاو does not mean simple “and”; it indicates accompaniment.

Summary Table

Type	Meaning	Example
مفعول به	direct object	قرأتُ الكتابَ
مفعول مطلق	emphasizes the verb	ضربته ضربًا
مفعول فيه	time/place ظرف	جلستُ أمامَ البيت
مفعول له	reason/purpose	سافرتُ طلبًا للعلم
مفعول معه	accompaniment	سرتُ والنهرَ

examples from the Qurʾān for each type of مفعول, which helps see how these grammatical categories actually function in the text.

1. مفعول به (Direct Object)

This is the thing directly acted upon by the verb.
Example:

خَلَقَ الإِنْسَانَ
“He created the human.”
— (Qurʾān 96:2)

- خَلَقَ = the verb
- الإنسانَ = مفعول به (object)

Another example:
وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا
“He taught Adam all the names.”
— (2:31)

- آدمَ = first object
- الأسماءَ = second object (because the verb عَلَّم takes two objects)

2. مفعول مطلق (Absolute Object)

A masdar from the same root as the verb, used to emphasize or describe the action.
Example:
وَكَلَّمَ اللهُ مُوسَى تَكْلِيمًا
“Allah spoke to Moses directly.”
— (4:164)

- كلم = verb
- تكليمًا = مفعول مطلق emphasizing the action.

Another example:
فَسَبِّحْهُ تَسْبِيحًا
“Glorify Him with glorification.”

3. مفعول فيه (Adverb of Time or Place)

Indicates when or where the action occurs.

Time

وَاذْكُرُوا اللهَّ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَعْدُودَاتٍ
“Remember Allah during numbered days.”
— (2:203)
Here the time expression functions like a ظرف.

Place

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلاً
(17:1) —
ظرف زمان = ليلاً (time adverb).
Another place example:
فِي الأَْرْضِ

4. مفعول له (Object of Cause)

Explains why the action was done.

Example:
يُبَيِّنُ اللهُّ لَكُمْ أَن تَضِلُّوا
(4:176) —
Or clearer classical example:
وَلا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلاَدَكُمْ خَشْيَةَ إِمْلاَقٍ
“Do not kill your children for fear of poverty.”
— (17:31)

- مفعول له = خشيةَ (reason).

5. مفعول معه (Object of Accompaniment)

Occurs after واو المعية meaning “together with”.
A Qurʾānic-style example used by grammarians:
سِرْتُ وَالنَّهْرَ
Meaning:
“I walked along with the river.”
The noun after واو المعية is منصوب.
Some grammarians interpret certain Qurʾānic constructions similarly, though clear examples are rarer in the Qurʾān.

A Visual Summary

Type	Meaning	Qurʾān Example
مفعول به	direct object	خلق الإنسان
مفعول مطلق	emphasis of verb	كلم الله موسى تكليمًا
مفعول فيه	time/place	أسرى بعبده ليلاً
مفعول له	reason	خشية إملاق
مفعول معه	accompaniment	سرت والنهر